

art of noise*

the seduction of claude debussy

Claude Debussy: Born August 22, 1862; Died March 25, 1918; Reborn June 15, 1999

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From left to right: Anne Dudley, Paul Morley, Lol Creme and Trevor Horn

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"THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY" (ZTT/Universal Records) is the first Art of Noise album since 1985 with founding members Trevor Horn, Anne Dudley and Paul Morley all in the fold. Joining the collective in its latest incarnation is guitarist/video artist Lol Creme, best known for his work with 10cc and Godley & Creme. Among the supporting players Art of Noise enlisted for their aural adventure are vocalists Sally Bradshaw and Donna Lewis, actor John Hurt and the master MC, Rakim.

"It's the soundtrack to a film that wasn't made about the life of Claude Debussy," explained AON upon the completion of the album. "It's the soundtrack to Art of Noise's wonderful world of the world, it's a journey through time, it's an album about beauty and the beat, it's a soundtrack to the apprehension and wonder there is as we slip from one century to another."

The album doesn't so much fuse the work of the revolutionary 19th century French composer with drum 'n' bass beats, hip hop verbiage, and synthesized symphonics, as it refracts the composer's life and impacts as a series of metaphors.

"One of the reasons we based our album on music that was 100 years old is because one of our manifestos was that we were raiding the 20th century for noise, sounds and ideas," say AON. "When we got back together to make this album, we noticed that in pop music, rock and dance, everyone plunders the recent past - the Eighties, the Seventies, the Sixties, and so on. We wanted to go further into the past than most pop music in order to go further into the future."

The story of "THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY" begins with the richly-textured strings and crackling breakbeats of "Il Pleure (At The Turn Of The Century)," featuring the first appearance of actor John Hurt as the narrator.

"Claude Debussy dies. Long live Claude Debussy!" exclaim AON. "It's the turn of the century, and the realities of the world are changing. 'Il Pleure,' as proud and reflective as any opening track to an album can be, creates a dream soundtrack for the beginning of a century, and indeed the beginning of an album. Sound and rhythms and ideas pour out of the past through the present into the future..."

"A song about death, beauty, longing, rain, love and the imagination. A song to begin with ..."

"Born On A Sunday" follows, with singer Sally Bradshaw's soprano weaving through an electronic haze of junglist sonics.

Cohesive and conceptual, operatic and epic, the improbable songs of "THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY" are intricately woven together to create a shape-shifting world where time and space bend to the will of Art of Noise.

"These days there tends to be one or two strong tracks on an album called 'singles,' and the rest of the album disperses itself in a series of signals with no structure to it," explain AON. "We were keen to make a record that was highly melodic and musical that was still connected in a contemporary sense that had shape to it and you can go on a voyage with it."

Art of Noise have formed a musical travelogue through a past where questions are wrapped in enigma, surrounded by mystery. For "Rapt: In The Evening Air" - "A tribute to Charles Baudelaire and Claude Debussy as one of the great double acts of all time: comedians, tragedians, artists, perverts, all that and more" - Art of Noise are joined by Rakim, who dapples the track with modern hip hop lyricism. The MC also features on "Metaforce," and is sampled on "Metaphor On The Floor," described by AON as "a song about impatience" in which "Art of Noise, Charles Baudelaire, Rakim and Claude Debussy continue their trip into another tense. Debussy visits a disco, Rakim rants about alienation and/or alien life, Baudelaire loses his temper and Art of Noise love their machines."

"reality is here before our eyes, stark naked, but where is the song to announce it?"
- claude debussy



With its evocative Gil Evans-styled orchestration, "On Being Blue" sets the title color to music, while "La Flute De Pan" suggests that there's more than meets the eye when someone places a flute in their mouth. "The Holy Egoism of Genius" is, like all the best pop music, "about cats, mental power, independence, vulnerability, and the general insecurity of physical existence.

"THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY" indeed shouts out Art of Noise's return to existence, though in its up-to-the-minute cultural subversiveness and ever-visionary pursuit of the musical Next, it seems as if they had never been gone at all.

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In 1979, Trevor Horn, with then-partner Geoff Downes, founded the Buggles, whose prescient hit, "Video Killed the Radio Star," essentially announced the arrival of the Eighties. Soon thereafter he founded his own label, Zang Tuum Tumb (ZTT). Since then, Horn has become one of popular music's most diverse and inventive producers, spinning the knobs for an eclectic assortment of artists ranging from ABC to Seal.

Horn, with his regular studio collaborators - Anne Dudley, Gary Langan, and J.J. Jeczalik - as well as ZTT co-founder/music scribe Paul Morley, formed Art of Noise in 1983, taking their name from an Italian futurist manifesto entitled "L'arte Dei Rumori." AON's indefinable sound re-jiggered any and all popular musics via the then-new studio gimcrackery of sampling and splicing found sounds, electro atmospherics and synthetic beats into post-modern dancefloor soundscapes. The first ZTT label release - the "INTO BATTLE WITH THE ART OF NOISE" EP - was an instant sensation, due in part to the breakdance classic "Beat Box."

The full-length AON debut, "(WHO'S AFRAID OF ?) THE ART OF NOISE!," arrived in 1984, featuring the driving "Close (to the Edit)." The second half of the Eighties found AON taking on different memberships, labels and collaborators, all the while continuing to create widely varigated experimental pop music. This included a remake of "Peter Gunn" featuring Duane Eddy (1986) and Tom Jones' version of Prince's "Kiss" (1988).

As a group, AON has been largely silent through the Nineties (with the exception of a number of remixed releases of their old work), as the individual members pursued their own projects (including Dudley's Academy Award-winning score for "The Full Monty").

Art of Noise's album "THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY" began in 1997 and came to an end on the morning of March 25, 1999 - 81 years to the day after the death of Debussy. What are the chances of that happening?

The Art of Noise can be viewed on: <http://www.theartofnoise.com>



Dear Writers & Editors:

Enclosed is the new **Art of Noise** record called **THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY**. It comes out June 29th on ZTT/Universal Records.

THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY is the first Art of Noise album in nine years, and the first since 1985 with all three founding members, Trevor Horn, Paul Morley and Anne Dudley. In addition, Art of Noise features the contributions of new member Lol Crème, best known for his work with 10cc and Godley & Creme (who also pioneered the art of video directing as we know it). Art of Noise were the premiere '80s experimental dance pop group that brought us the robo-boogie classics *Beat Box*, *Who's Afraid (Of The Art of Noise)*, *Close (To The Edit)*, as well as the beautiful *Moments in Love*. Horn, Morley and Dudley are visionary musicians who were among the first to fuse technology, pop and dance. Where would Fatboy be without them?

A reunion album of sorts, **THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY** uses the modern rhythms forged by their progeny and combines them with ideas taken from one of the most important figures in 20th-Century music. Paul Morley states: "...We noticed that in pop music, rock and dance, everyone plunders the recent past...we wanted to take this mindset one step beyond that."

On the album, Art of Noise have lush, hypnotic dreamscapes go head to head with strong rhythmic tracks, using jungle and hip-hop beats along with Trevor Horn's unique production aesthetics to help get their point across. **THE SEDUCTION OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY** is about, because of and for the life and music of Debussy. Art Of Noise are joined on their adventure by the transporting vocal talents of Sally Bradshaw and Donna Lewis, the spoken voice of John Hurt and the savvy mic techniques of Rakim.

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